BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in

North West Region of Saskatchewan

This community report is part of the "Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC's Western Region" study.

The North West Region of Saskatchewan includes the following three major urban centres together with dozens of medium to small size towns and villages, and dozens of rural municipalities consisting of small hamlets, farms, and small acreages.

Major Urban Centres	Population 2011 Census	Permanent Resident Landings 2009-2013
North Battleford	19,216	876
Meadow Lake	5,045	156
Kindersley	4,678	179

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Data Sources: 10 Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from governmental and non-governmental sources.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Top services offered
- Reception and settlement.
- Language assessment and training.
- Career counseling.
- Employment searches and applications.
- Community networking and cultural orientation.
- Access to technology (e.g. computers, faxes, internet).

Key gaps identified
- Insufficient services for newcomers living outside main urban centers, and for newcomers ineligible for some services.
- Insufficient organizational capacity to provide some services for SPOs.
- Insufficient capacity for strategic planning and partnerships for SPOs.

Barriers to access services
- Insufficient access to information.
- Insufficient appropriate employment opportunities.
- Insufficient language training and costs of services.
- Insufficient affordable housing and transportation services.
- Insufficient childcare.

Top services needed
Reception and welcome; language training; credential recognition; employment related training (career planning, job searches, job applications, and job referrals); transportation; housing; and social networking orientation and facilitation.

Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services
Language training; housing; computer skills; job search and application skills; information on immigration and settlement services and immigration laws; financial support; and childcare.

PARTNERSHIPS

Many formal and informal partnerships exist involving various organizations in the region. Most partnerships tend to be informal rather than formal, and in many cases they simply involve informal consultations, coordination and information sharing on an ad-hoc or on an as needed basis, rather than formal, institutionalized, contributory partnerships per se.

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY

Economic integration of a substantial number of immigrants has been facilitated by the economic boom, and by the (SINP), which links immigrants and employers. Nevertheless, many newcomers face economic integration challenges in the form of unemployment, underemployment, or the need to work more than eight hours daily at two or more jobs. Community integration has been facilitated by services provided to newcomers, but some challenges persist because of insufficient services in some urban centres and rural areas.

IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT SERVICES AND GAPS IN CIC'S WESTERN REGION:

North West Region of Saskatchewan

Introduction

This report is part of a larger project designed to better understand various aspects of newcomer settlement and integration services in Western Canada. It provides a summary of the findings of a survey regarding the settlement and integration of newcomers in the North West Region of Saskatchewan.

The report has four principal foci: the factors affecting the settlement and integration of newcomers in this region; the existing and needed settlement and integration services for newcomers; the capacities of service provider organizations to offer those services and what may be required to increase those capacities; and the existing and potential partnerships in planning and providing services for improving the settlement and integration prospects of newcomers.

The information for the report was collected through interviews conducted in November and December 2014 with 10 representatives of selected settlement and integration service provider organizations and some other types of service provider organizations in the region. Although 10 interviews were conducted, the actual number of respondents to each question in this report may vary because not all interviewees respondent to all questions.

Background Information

PROFILE OF NORTH CENTRAL REGION

The North West Region of Saskatchewan includes the cities of North Battleford and Meadow Lake, and the town of Kindersley. It also includes numerous medium- to small-size towns and villages, and several rural municipalities consisting of small hamlets, farms, and small acreages.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2011 the population of North Battleford was 19,216, an increase of 6.3% from 2006; the population of Meadow Lake was

5,045, an increase of 5.7% from 2006; and the population of Kindersley was 4,678, an increase of 6% from 2006.

IMMIGRATION FLOWS TO NORTH WEST REGION

CIC immigration statistics from 2009-2013 indicate the arrival of approximately 1500 permanent residents to

this region, which constitutes approximately 3% of all immigrants destined to Saskatchewan during that period. Of these, most settled in the three major urban centres in the region, namely North Battleford 876, Kindersley 179, and Meadow Lake 156. It is important to note that these statistics do not include temporary residents who in this region, as in other regions, constitute a substantial number of newcomers.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN NUMBER OF NEWCOMERS

With the exception of one respondent who reported the number of newcomers 'stayed the same', all respondents indicated the number of newcomers destined for or living in or near their respective community increased in the past 5 years. The major factors cited for the increase were: economic growth and industrial expansion; growing ethnocultural enclaves; the arrival of an increasing number of temporary foreign workers; special recruitment efforts for workers by the business and health sectors; family members of permanent residents and temporary workers coming at same time or after arrival of principal applicants.

Community Settlement

EASE OF SETTLEMENT IN COMMUNITIES

Respondents were divided on their perception of how easy it was for newcomers to settle in their community. The responses were as follows: 'somewhat difficult,' (3); 'difficult' (2); or 'very difficult' (1); 'easy' (2); and 'somewhat easy' (1). Despite those differences on the ease of settlement, the general consensus among respondents was that many newcomers faced a wide range of challenges in settling and that many needed services to facilitate their settlement.

FACTORS AFFECTING SETTLEMENT

Respondents highlighted several factors that either facilitated or hampered settlement. Interestingly, in some cases the same factors facilitated some aspects of settlement but hampered others (e.g., size of the community). Similarly, in some cases the existence of a particular factor facilitated settlement, but its absence hampered it (e.g. adequate and affordable housing).

The three major sets of factors cited as facilitating or

hampering settlement in various communities are what might be referred to as services factors, economic and employment factors, and community factors.

The key service factors cited as facilitating settlement included: the existence of settlement services organizations in some of the larger urban communities (3); establishing flexible client-centered programming schedules for some services both during days and evenings (1); adequate and easily accessible information on services available (1); eligibility for some categories of newcomers to access CIC funded services (e.g., government assisted refugees, temporary foreign workers, international students, etc.) (4); access to religion related services (1).

The key economic and employment factor noted either explicitly or implicitly by respondents not only for attracting newcomers to the region but also for facilitating their settlement and economic and social integration was a buoyant economy with ample employment opportunities in various sectors ranging from the entry level to the senior level (6).

The services factors cited as hampering settlement in communities included: the absence of settlement services organizations in some of the smaller urban and surrounding rural communities (3); the absence of many types of settlement and integration as well as mainstream services in many small urban and rural areas (4); challenges faced by those living in such small urban and rural communities in accessing settlement service organizations (including the Regional Newcomer Gateways) that exist in the larger urban centres (3); insufficient language training (7);

The economic and employment factors cited as hampering settlement: lack of employment opportunities for some newcomers (2); and insufficient knowledge on the part of employers on hiring and managing newcomers as employees (1).

The community factors cited as hampering settlement included: geographic and social isolation (4); inadequate public transportation services for people without vehicles or without drivers licenses (2); insufficient adequate or affordable housing (2); complete absence or very limited number and size of ethnocultural and religious communities valued by newcomers (2); insufficient inclination among individuals in the community, including officials of governmental agencies (e.g., municipal, policing, etc.) and non- governmental agencies to welcome and help newcomers (2); and insufficient interest and involvement by municipal officials in the settlement and integration of newcomers (1).

FACTORS AFFECTING GETTING JOBS

The majority of respondents indicated it was 'somewhat easy' (7) or 'easy' (1) for newcomers to get jobs in their community, and only a small minority indicated it was 'somewhat difficult' (1). Respondents also indicated that some of the major barriers for newcomers in getting jobs included: language barriers (7); challenges related to foreign credentials recognition (2); insufficient job opportunities (2); insufficient transportation services (1); insufficient childcare (1); insufficient awareness in the business community regarding how to hire and mentor newcomers (1); racial stereotypes (1).

Available Settlement Services

TYPES OF NEWCOMERS SERVED

In response to the question regarding which categories of newcomers their organizations provide services, respondents indicated that: (9) provided services to permanent residents, (6) provided services to TFWs, (5) provided services to naturalized citizens, (4) provided services to refugees, (3) provided services to international students, and (2) provided services to refugee claimants. Three respondents reported that their organizations also provided some services to "other" newcomers including SINP applicants, people on work/holiday visas, and children of various categories of newcomers.

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Respondents identified a broad range of services their organizations provided newcomers. Most of these services fall within the scope of what are broadly defined as settlement services that can be grouped into the following sub-categories: information, orientation and general referral services; (1); language assessment and training (3); career counselling (3); employment search and job referral services; community networking and cultural bridging services (1); student and family support services (1); sectors orientation services (e.g., financial, labour, health, educational sectors) (2); access to technology services (e.g., computers, copiers, faxes, and internet) (2); and mental and physical health services (2).

In response to whether the services they provided needed to be expanded either in number or in their availability to a broader and larger number of newcomers not only in larger urban communities but also in smaller urban and rural areas, they were divided as (5) said yes and (3) said no. Some indicated that the need to expand services in the future depends on immigration trends in relation to economic trends. Others indicated that some of the existing services must be refined, rather than expanded.

At least one respondent indicated that the number of active client files for one organization actually decreased over time and speculated that this may have resulted growth in family and friendship circles among newcomers and the growth of newcomer communities resulting from substantial increases in immigration flows and immigrant retention in recent years. However, at least one respondent indicated that retention is by no means 100% and that there is still an outmigration of newcomers who choose to move to other regions of the province or elsewhere in Canada in pursuit of employment opportunities and communities that they believe provides them with better quality of life.

SERVICES NEEDED MOST FOR SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Respondents indicated that the services needed most for settlement and integration were those related to: reception and especially community integration (e.g., welcome wagon) (3); information on and access to various settlement and integration programs (2); language training at all levels (5); educational and skill upgrading (2); employment training and searches for lower skilled immigrants (2); international credential recognitions for highly trained immigrants (2); help with immigration related matters (1); finding adequate, appropriate and affordable housing (3); affordable and convenient transportation (1); driver training (1); and promoting immigrant and diversity orientation and awareness among employers and other members of their communities (1).

SERVICES NEEDED MOST BY NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents noted that the services needed most by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services were: information on immigration and settlement services (2); information on immigration law and the rights of citizens, permanent residents, and visitors (2); language training (3); upgrading computer skills; improving job search and job application skills (3); housing (3); financial support (1); and child care (1).

Assessment of Newcomer Needs

Of the eight respondents answering the question regarding assessments of newcomer needs, four indicated their organizations assessed the service needs of newcomers either on their own (3) or jointly with other organizations (1), and the others (4) indicated their organizations did not assess those needs regularly. One organization indicated it conducted surveys both internally and jointly with other organizations. The organizations that assessed internally or jointly did so largely informally, rather than formally, through one or more of the following means: observations by organizational officials; conversations with members of other organizations; conversations with newcomers individually and in groups; client file reviews; and surveys.

Organizational Capacities

Respondents were divided on whether their organizations had adequate organizational capacities to perform their functions. Areas in which the majority of respondents indicated their organization had adequate capacity included: staff with key skills to provide services (6 yes and 3 no); communication with stakeholders (6 yes and 2 no); coordinate services with other service providers (6 yes and

3 no); and mobilizing of community to support and welcome newcomers (3 yes and 5 no). Areas in which a minority of respondents indicated their organizations had adequate capacity included: creating a governance and strategic plan (4 yes and 3 no); meeting reporting requirements (5 yes and 2 no); and providing services in both official languages (2 yes and 6 no).

Most respondents indicated, either explicitly or implicitly, that their organizations required more financial and human resources to expand the scope of existing services or to offer additional services. In responding to questions regarding the adequacy of financial resources from various sources a larger number of respondents indicated they were adequate from governmental sources (7 yes and 2 no), than the number who indicated they were adequate from non-governmental sources (2 yes and 2 no).

Partnerships

The majority of respondents (6) indicated they had formal or informal partnerships with other organizations in the regional community, and the minority (3) indicated they did not have such partnerships. Most partnerships tended to be informal and non- institutionalized, rather than formal and institutionalized. Generally, they involved consultation, coordination and information sharing on an ad-hoc or on an as-needed basis, rather in a regularized or systematic basis. Such partnerships involved educational, health, social services, employment, business, and parenting organizations.

Of the 4 respondents who answered the question regarding what kind of activities for the benefit of newcomers their organizations partnered with other organizations, 2 indicated integration activities, 3 indicated settlement activities, and 3 indicated welcoming community activities.

Research Team

Joe Garcea, Ph.D. *(Co- Principal Investigator)*

University of Saskatchewan
Tel: 306-966-5222, joe.garcea@usask.ca

Bill Ashton, Ph.D. *(Principal Investigator)*
Rachael Pettigrew, Ph.D. *(Research Associate)*
Eleni Galatsanou, MSc *(Project Coordinator)*

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University
Tel: 204-571-8513, Ashtonw@brandonu.ca

Lori Wilkinson, Ph.D. *(Chair of Project Advisory Panel)*

University of Manitoba
Tel: 204- 474-8491, Lori.Wilkinson@umanitoba.ca